

**REMARKS/ARGUMENTS**

Claims 1-130 were pending in this application at the time the present Office Action was mailed. Claims 20, 21, 30, 31, 34, 35, 85, 86 and 94-130 have been withdrawn from consideration in response to the restriction requirement, pending allowance of a generic claim. Claims 1, 9, 16 and 27 have been amended to clarify certain aspects of these claims. Claims 2, 4, 7, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17, 19, 23, 24, 26, 28, 32, 36, 41-43, 47, 50-53, 55, 64, 65, 67, 76, 77, 79, 82, 83, 87 and 93 have been amended solely to correct clerical errors or improve readability of the claims, and not to distinguish any reference of record. Accordingly, claims 1-19, 22-29, 32, 33, 36-84 and 87-93 are now pending in the present application.

In the Office Action dated August 14, 2002, the Examiner rejected claims 1-19, 22-29, 32, 33, 36-84 and 87-93. More specifically, the status of the application in light of this Office Action is as follows:

(A) Claims 1-19, 22-29, 32, 33, 36-84 and 87-93 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention;

(B) Claims 1-3, 6-11, 14-18, 23-27, 36-44, 47-49, 83, 84 and 89-93 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,117,077 to Del Mar et al. ("Del Mar");

(C) Claims 1-3, 5-11, 13-18, 22, 24-27, 36-38, 40-44, 48, 83, 84 and 89-93 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,381,012 to Russek ("Russek"); and

(D) Claims 45 and 46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Del Mar or Russek.

The undersigned attorney wishes to thank the Examiner for engaging in a telephone interview on November 5, 2002, to discuss the present Office Action. The following remarks summarize and further expand on the agreements reached between

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the Examiner and the undersigned attorney during the November 5 telephone interview.

**A. Response to the Section 112 Rejection of Claims 1-19, 22-29, 32, 33, 36-84 and 87-93**

Claims 1-19, 22-29, 32, 33, 36-84 and 87-93 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for various reasons. For example, claims 1, 9, 16 and 83 were rejected because the term "and/or" is allegedly vague, as is the recitation of a coupler "location" being "configured." In addition, these claims were further rejected under Section 112, second paragraph, for allegedly inferentially claiming the coupling positions. In response to these rejections, claims 1, 9, 16 and 83 have been amended in accordance with the agreements reached between the Examiner and the undersigned attorney during the telephone conference of November 5, 2002. Specifically, the "and/or" language has been removed and, instead of "locations" being configured, the claims now recite "portions" being configured. With regard to the alleged inferential claiming of the coupling positions, as acknowledged by the Examiner on November 5, applicants are not claiming the coupling positions but merely defining the environment in which the claimed apparatus can operate. Therefore, in accordance with the agreements reached between the Examiner and the undersigned attorney on November 5, the Section 112 rejection of claims 1, 9, 16 and 83 should be withdrawn.

Dependent claims 2, 10 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being vague for including engagement members that allegedly perform the same function as the locations recited in the corresponding base claims 1, 9 and 16, respectively. As amended, based claim 1 now recites that the first coupler "portion" is configured to removably "carry" a first coupler, and dependent claim 2 recites that the first engagement member is configured to removably "engage" the first coupler. Base claims 9 and 16, and corresponding dependent claims 10 and 17, respectively, have been similarly amended. Therefore, any vagueness that may have existed in claims 2, 10 and 17 has now been eliminated and the Section 112 rejection of these claims should be withdrawn.

Claims 3, 11, 13, 18, 22, 44 and 47 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for allegedly "omitting essential cooperative relationships between elements." Specifically, these claims are allegedly lacking structure for "connecting the couplers to the rest of the claimed apparatus." Applicants respectfully disagree with this assertion. For example, referring to claim 3, claim 3 is directed to the apparatus of claim 1 and further comprises "the first and second couplers" introduced in Claim 1. Claim 1 clearly recites the "cooperative relationship" between the couplers added by claim 3 and the apparatus in claim 1. For example, claim 1 recites that the first coupler portion is configured to "removably carry a first coupler." Thus, the first coupler portion removably connects the first coupler with the rest of the structure and, accordingly, claim 3 is not incomplete. Claims 11, 13, 18, 22, 44 and 47 are similar to claim 3 in this respect. Therefore, the Section 112 rejection of claims 3, 11, 13, 18, 22, 44 and 47 should be withdrawn.

Claims 4, 12, 19, 28, 47 and 87 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for allegedly inferentially claiming the percutaneous electrical probe by reciting "an electrical contact positioned to connect to a percutaneous electrical probe." These claims have been amended to read "an electrical contact configured to be connected to a percutaneous electrical probe." Therefore, claims 4, 12, 19, 28, 47 and 87 do not inferentially claim the percutaneous electrical probe, and the Section 112 rejection of these claims should be withdrawn.

Claims 7, 15, 26, 41, 64, 76 and 93 were rejected under Section 112, second paragraph, for being vague by limiting the coupling positions which have not been positively recited. As amended, these claims now limit the coupling portions (or the engagement members, as the case may be) which are positively recited, and the coupling positions describe the environment in which the claimed apparatus can operate. Therefore, the Section 112 rejection of claims 7, 15, 26, 41, 64, 76 and 93 should be withdrawn.

Claim 8 was rejected under Section 112, second paragraph, because "the first coupling location" lacks antecedent basis. Claim 8 has been amended to correct this

typographical error and replace the first coupling "location" with the first coupling "position." Therefore, the Section 112 rejection of claim 8 should be withdrawn.

Claims 16, 27, 40, 43, 53, 65 and 82 were rejected under Section 112, second paragraph, as being vague because they relate the coupler locations (or engagement members, as the case may be) to the coupling positions, and the coupling positions are not positively recited in the claims. As amended, these claims now recite, e.g., the first coupler "portion configured to be positioned closer than the second coupler portion to the first coupling position of the body of the recipient." Acceptability of the claim language depends on whether one of ordinary skill in the art would understand what is claimed, in light of the specification. MPEP 2173.05(b). As acknowledged by the Examiner during the telephone conference of November 5, 2002, one of ordinary skill in the art would understand that the first coupling position is not being claimed by the applicants in claims 16, 27, 40, 43, 53, 65 and 82, but is merely being used to define the relative positions of the first and second coupler portions. Accordingly, the Section 112 rejection of these claims should be withdrawn.

Claim 32 was rejected under Section 112, second paragraph, as being vague for allegedly claiming a "positive connection to the human body." Claim 32 depends from base claim 27 and further comprises the first coupler. The first coupler "is movable relative to the support member between an attached position . . . and a coupled position with the first coupler operatively coupled to the recipient at the first coupling position." As discussed with the Examiner on November 5, 2002, applicants are not claiming a connection to the human body. In contrast, applicants are claiming the first coupler which is movable to a coupled position "operatively coupled to the recipient." Therefore, the Section 112 rejection of claim 32 should be withdrawn.

Claims 36, 50 and 52 were rejected under Section 112, second paragraph, as being vague for further limiting the first coupler which is not positively recited. As amended, these claims now limit the first engagement member which is positively recited. Therefore, the Section 112 rejection of claims 36, 50 and 52 should be withdrawn.

Claim 42 was rejected under Section 112, second paragraph, as being vague because it did not state what element the "central axis" was a central axis of. As amended, claim 42 now recites "... a central axis of the support member." Therefore, the Section 112 of claim 42 should be withdrawn.

Claims 55, 67 and 79 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for "inferentially claiming the electrode and connection to the recipient." These claims have been amended to read "an actuator tool configured to insert a percutaneous electrode in the recipient." Therefore, claims 55, 67 and 79 do not inferentially claim the electrode and connection to the recipient, and the Section 112 rejection of these claims should be withdrawn.

Claim 77 was rejected under Section 112, second paragraph, for allegedly inferentially claiming "a coupling region of the back." As discussed with the Examiner on November 5, 2002, the coupling region on the back of the recipient is recited in claim 77 to describe an environment in which the claimed apparatus can operate and, accordingly, applicants are not claiming the coupling region on the back of the recipient. Therefore, in accordance with agreements reached with the Examiner on November 5, the Section 112 rejection of claim 77 should be withdrawn.

Claim 82 was rejected under Section 112, second paragraph, because "the coupling positions" lacked antecedent basis. As amended, claim 82 now recites that the coupling region of the back of the recipient includes a plurality of coupling positions. Therefore, the language added to claim 82 provides the antecedent basis for "the coupling positions" and the Section 112 rejection of claim 82 should be withdrawn.

**B. Response to the Section 102(e) Rejection of Claims 1-3, 6-11, 14-18, 23-27, 36-44, 47-49, 83, 84 and 89-93**

Claims 1-3, 6-11, 14-18, 23-27, 36-44, 47-49, 83, 84 and 89-93 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Del Mar. Del Mar allegedly shows the engagement members recited in some of these claims as an output terminal 120 and an input terminal 102 (see Figure 5 of Del Mar). Further, the Office Action alleges

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that the output terminal 120 and the input terminal 102 of Del Mar are capable of "meeting the functional use recitations presented in the claims."

1. **Claims 1, 9, 16 and 27 Are Directed to Apparatuses for Supporting, *Inter Alia*, a First Coupler That Is Movable Relative to a First Coupler Portion Between a First Attached Position and a First Coupled Position**

Independent claims 1, 9, 16 and 27 are directed to apparatuses for supporting couplers for removable coupling to a recipient. As amended, these claims include, *inter alia*, a first coupler portion configured to be positioned proximate to a first coupling position of a body of a recipient, and a second coupler portion configured to be positioned proximate to a second coupling position of the body of the recipient. The first and second coupler portions are configured to removably carry a first coupler and a second coupler, respectively. In addition, the first and second couplers are movable between attached positions in which they are carried by their respective coupler portions, and coupled positions in which they are operatively coupled to the recipient at first and second coupling positions, respectively.

2. **Del Mar Is Directed to a Recorder Housing Having a Single Input Terminal Connected to a Terminal Pad With a Coupling Lead**

Del Mar discloses two embodiments of a recorder housing 10, 100. As shown in Figure 5 of Del Mar, the recorder housing 100 includes an input terminal 102 that receives a coupling lead 104 connecting a negative terminal pad 116 to the recorder housing 100. The recorder housing 100 further includes an output terminal 120 for outputting accumulated data to a conventional PC.

3. **Del Mar Cannot Support a Section 102(e) Rejection of Independent Claims 1, 9, 16 and 27 for At Least the Reason that Del Mar Fails to Teach or Suggest the Coupler Portions Recited by These Claims**

Claims 1, 9, 16 and 27 include first and second coupler portions configured to removably carry first and second couplers, respectively. The first and second couplers are defined as being movable relative to their respective coupler portions between

attached positions in which they are carried by their respective coupler portions and coupled positions in which they are operatively coupled to the recipient at first and second coupling positions, respectively. Del Mar fails to teach or suggest any coupler portions configured to removably carry such couplers. At most, Del Mar discloses the conventional input terminal 102 which connects to the conventional coupling lead 104. The coupling lead 104 is not "movable" between an "attached position" in which the coupling lead 104 is carried by the input terminal 102 and a "coupled position" in which the coupling lead 104 is "operatively coupled to the recipient." Clearly, if the coupling lead 104 is ever moved from being "attached to" the input terminal 102 it will immediately become inoperative and cannot then be "operatively coupled to the recipient."

Further, (and contrary to the suggestion in the Office Action) the output terminal 120 shown in Figure 5 of Del Mar cannot be construed as one of the coupler portions of claims 1, 9, 16 and 27. The coupler portions of these claims are configured to removably carry a coupler which can be "operatively coupled to the recipient." In contrast, Del Mar explicitly states that the output terminal 120 is configured to carry a coupler for connection "to a conventional PC" (emphasis added). Therefore, Del Mar cannot support a Section 102(e) rejection of claims 1, 9, 16 and 27, and the rejection of these claims should be withdrawn.

Claims 2, 3 and 6-8 depend from base claim 1. Claims 10, 11, 14 and 15 depend from base claim 9. Claims 17, 18 and 23-26 depend from claim 16. Claims 36-44 and 47-49 depend from base claim 27. Therefore, Del Mar cannot support a Section 102(e) rejection of dependent claims 2, 3, 6-8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 23-26, 36-44 and 47-49 for at least the reasons discussed above with regard to the rejection of the corresponding base claims 1, 9, 16 and 27, and for the additional features of these dependent claims. Accordingly, the Section 102(e) rejection of claims 2, 3, 6-8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18, 23-26, 36-44 and 47-49 should be withdrawn.

4. **Claim 83 Is Directed to an Apparatus for Supporting Couplers That Includes, *Inter Alia*, a First Coupler, a Second Coupler, a Recipient Care Unit, a First Link Between the Care Unit and the First Coupler, and a Second Link Between the Care Unit and the Second Coupler**

Independent claim 83 is directed to an apparatus for supporting couplers for removable coupling to a recipient and includes, *inter alia*, a first coupler and a second coupler. The first coupler is configured to be removably supported at a first coupler portion and be operatively coupled to the body of the recipient. The second coupler is configured to be removably supported at a second coupler portion and be operatively coupled to the body of the recipient. Claim 83 further includes a recipient care unit, a first link between the care unit and the first coupler, and a second link between the care unit and the second coupler.

Del Mar cannot support a Section 102(e) rejection of claim 83 for at least the reasons discussed above with regard to, for example, the rejection of claim 1, and for the additional features of claim 83. For example, claim 83 includes first and second couplers configured to be operatively coupled to a body of a recipient. Del Mar does not disclose such first and second couplers. Therefore, the Section 102(e) rejection of claim 83 should be withdrawn.

Claims 84 and 89-93 depend from base claim 83. Accordingly, Del Mar cannot support a Section 102(e) rejection of dependent claims 84 and 89-93 for at least the reasons discussed above with regard to the rejection of base claim 83, and for the additional features of these dependent claims. Accordingly, the Section 102(e) rejection of claims 84 and 89-93 should be withdrawn.

C. **Response to the Section 102(b) Rejection of Claims 1-3, 5-11, 13-18, 22, 24-27, 36-38, 40-44, 48, 83, 84 and 89-93**

Claims 1-3, 5-11, 13-18, 22, 24-27, 36-38, 40-44, 48, 83, 84 and 89-93 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Russek. The Office Action alleges that the wires 10 and connectors 10' as shown in Figure 2 of Russek anticipate the engagement members recited in the claims. In addition, the Office Action alleges



that the electrode 14 shown in Figure 2 of Russek anticipates the couplers recited in the claims.

**1. Russek Discloses a Belt-Like Electrode Placement Device Having an Electrode That Receives a Plug Attached to a Wire**

As shown in Figures 1 and 2 of Russek, Russek discloses a belt-like electrode placement device 1 having a wire 10 with a plug 10' that connects to a conventional electrode 14. The conventional electrode 14 can be located at a predetermined position on a body.

**2. Russek Cannot Support a Section 102(b) Rejection of Independent Claims 1, 9, 16, 27 and 83 for At Least the Reason that Russek Fails to Teach or Suggest First and Second Coupler Portions Configured to Be Positioned Proximate to First and Second Coupling Positions, Respectively, of a Body of a Recipient**

Independent claims 1, 9, 16, 27 and 83 include a support member having, *inter alia*, first and second coupler portions "configured to be positioned proximate" to first and second coupling positions, respectively, of a body of a recipient. Russek does not include any such coupler portions.

Further, the Examiner contends that the wire 10 and plug 10' of Russek anticipates the engagement members recited in the claims. However, the engagement members of the claims are "configured to removably carry a first coupler" which is "movable" between "a first attached position with the first coupler carried by the first engagement member and a first coupled position with the first coupler operatively coupled to the recipient." In contrast, the wire 10 and plug 10' of Russek are not configured to removably carry such a first coupler. Assuming (as suggested in the Office Action) that the electrode 14 is analogous in part to the coupler of the foregoing claims, the electrode 14 is not "movable" between an "attached position" connected to the plug 10' and a "coupled position" operatively coupled to the recipient. If the electrode 14 of Russek is moved from being "attached" to the plug 10' then it cannot be "operatively coupled to the recipient." Therefore, the Section 102(b) rejection of claims 1, 9, 16, 27 and 83 should be withdrawn.

Claims 2, 3 and 5-8 depend from base claim 1. Claims 10, 11 and 13-15 depend from base claim 9. Claims 17, 18, 22 and 24-26 depend from base claim 16. Claims 36-38, 40-44 and 48 depend from base claim 27. Claims 84 and 89-93 depend from base claim 83. Therefore, Russek cannot support a Section 102(b) rejection of dependent claims 2, 3, 5-8, 10, 11, 13-15, 17, 18, 22, 24-26, 36-38, 40-44, 48, 84 and 89-93 for at least the reasons discussed above with regard to the rejection of the corresponding base claims, and for the additional features of these dependent claims. Accordingly, the Section 102(b) rejection of these dependent claims should be withdrawn.

**D. Response to the Section 103 Rejection of Claims 45 and 46**

Claims 45 and 46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Del Mar or Russek. Claims 45 and 46 depend from base claim 27. As explained above with regard to the rejections of claim 27, claim 27 is allowable over the applied references for at least the reason that the applied references fail to teach or suggest all of the features of claim 27. Specifically, Del Mar does not cure the deficiencies of Russek, or vice versa, with regard to base claim 27. Nor would it have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Del Mar or Russek to cure the deficiencies of these references with regard to claim 27. Therefore, dependent claims 45 and 46 are allowable over the applied references for at least the reason that base claim 27 is allowable, and for the additional features of these dependent claims. Accordingly, the Section 103 rejection of claims 45 and 46 should be withdrawn.

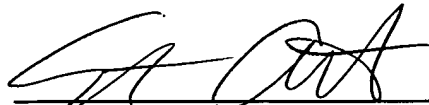
**CONCLUSION**

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Applicants, therefore, request reconsideration of the application and allowance of all pending claims. If the Examiner wishes to discuss the above-noted distinctions between the claims and the applied references, or any other matter related to this application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Stephen E. Arnett by telephone at (206) 264-6351. Additionally, if the Examiner notices any

informalities in the claims, he is also encouraged to contact Stephen E. Arnett to expediently correct any such informalities.

No fees are believed due with this communication. However, the Commissioner is hereby authorized and requested to charge any deficiency in fees herein to Deposit Account No. 50-0665.

Respectfully submitted,  
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Appl. No. 09/751,382

**APPENDIX****VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE****In the Specification:**

Figures 1A-G are block diagrams showing deployment and use of a percutaneous electrical therapy system and electrode assembly in accordance with an embodiment of the invention. As shown in Figures 1A and 1B, the system can include an electrode 1 having a sharp point 2 at its distal end and a housing 4 surrounding at least the sharp point 2 when the electrode 1 is in its undeployed and uninserted states. The undeployed and uninserted states include pre-deployment and post-deployment states of the electrode 1. The housing 4 can have an aperture 5 at its distal end. An actuator 6 can interact with a handle 11 at the proximal end of electrode 2-1 as shown to move the electrode 1.

Deployment of the electrode assembly can include the steps taken to place the electrode assembly in proper position and condition for use in electrical therapy. Figure 1A shows the electrode assembly in an undeployed (pre-deployed) state. During deployment, the distal face 7 of housing 4 is placed against a patient's skin 22, as shown in Figure 1B. This action supports housing 4 with respect to the patient's skin, thereby controlling the angle between the housing and the patient's skin. Electrode 2-1 is then inserted through aperture 5 into the tissue underlying the patient's skin by moving actuator 6 distally, as shown in Figure 1C. As it moves, actuator 6 (and therefore electrode 21) is supported by housing 4 to control the angle at which the electrode 1 enters into the patient's tissue.

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**In the Claims:**

1. (Amended) An apparatus for supporting couplers for removable coupling to a recipient during at least one of therapy administration and/or recipient monitoring, the apparatus comprising a support member configured to rest on a body of the recipient, the support member having a first coupler ~~location-portion~~ configured to be positioned proximate to a first coupling position of the body of the recipient, the support member further having a second coupler ~~location-portion~~ configured to be positioned proximate to a second coupling position of the body of the recipient, the first coupler ~~location-portion~~ being configured to removably carry a first coupler, wherein the first coupler is movable relative to the first coupler portion between a first carried position with the first coupler carried by the first coupler portion and a first coupled position with the first coupler operatively coupled to the recipient at the first coupling position, the second coupler ~~location-portion~~ being configured to removably carry a second coupler, wherein the second coupler is movable relative to the second coupler portion between a second carried position with the second coupler carried by the second coupler portion and a second coupled position with the second coupler operatively coupled to the recipient at the second coupling position, the support member being spaced apart from the first and second coupling positions when resting on the body of the recipient.

2. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:  
a first engagement member depending from the support member at the first coupler ~~location-portion~~ and configured to removably ~~carry-engage~~ the first coupler; and

a second engagement member depending from the support member at the second coupler ~~location-portion~~ and configured to removably ~~carry-engage~~ the second coupler.

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4. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:

the first coupler, wherein ~~the first coupler is moveable relative to the first coupler location between an attached position with the first coupler engaged with the support member at the first coupler location, a detached position with the first coupler disengaged from the first coupler location, and a coupled position with the first coupler operatively coupled to the recipient at the first coupling position, the first coupler having~~ has an electrical contact positioned configured to be connected to a percutaneous electrical probe inserted into the patient; and

a flexible cable connected between the first coupler and the support member, the cable remaining connected between the first coupler and the support member when the first coupler is moved from the first carried~~attached~~ position to the ~~detached position and the~~ first coupled position.

7. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the first and second coupler portions are two of a larger plurality of coupler portions, wherein each of the larger plurality of coupler portions are configured to be positioned proximate to a corresponding one of a larger plurality of coupling positions including the first and second coupling positions,~~are two of a larger plurality of coupling positions and the first and second coupler locations are two of a larger plurality of coupler locations,~~ further wherein an outline of the coupling positions defines a first shape and an outline of the coupler ~~locations~~ portions defines a corresponding second shape at least generally similar to the first shape.

8. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the first coupler ~~location~~ portion is positioned closer than the second coupler ~~location~~ portion to the first coupling ~~location~~ position.

9. (Amended) An apparatus for supporting couplers for removable coupling to a recipient during at least one of therapy administration and/or recipient monitoring, the apparatus comprising a support member configured to rest on a body of the recipient, the support member being elongated along a support member axis and

having a first coupler ~~location-portion~~ configured to be positioned proximate to a first coupling position of the body of the recipient when the support member rests on the body of the recipient, the support member further having a second coupler ~~location-portion~~ configured to be positioned proximate to a second coupling position of the body of the recipient when the support member rests on the body of the recipient, the first coupler ~~location-portion~~ being configured to removably carry a first coupler, wherein the first coupler is movable relative to the first coupler portion between a first carried position with the first coupler carried by the first coupler portion and a first coupled position with the first coupler operatively coupled to the recipient at the first coupling position, the second coupler ~~location-portion~~ being configured to removably carry a second coupler, wherein the second coupler is movable relative to the second coupler portion between a second carried position with the second coupler carried by the second coupler portion and a second coupled position with the second coupler operatively coupled to the recipient at the second coupling position, the first coupler ~~location-portion~~ being positioned closer than the second coupler ~~location-portion~~ to the support member axis.

10. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 9, further comprising:

a first engagement member depending from the support member at the first coupler ~~location-portion~~ and configured to removably ~~carry-engage~~ the first coupler; and

a second engagement member depending from the support member at the second coupler ~~location-portion~~ and configured to removably ~~carry-engage~~ the second coupler.

12. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 9, further comprising:

the first coupler, wherein ~~the first coupler is moveable relative to the first coupler location between an attached position with the first coupler engaged with the support member at the first coupler location, a detached position with the first coupler disengaged from the first coupler location, and a coupled position with the first coupler operatively coupled to the recipient at the first coupling position,~~ the first coupler having

has an electrical contact positioned configured to be connected to a percutaneous electrical probe inserted into the patient; and

a flexible cable connected between the first coupler and the support member, the cable remaining connected between the first coupler and the support member when the first coupler is moved from the first carried attached position to the detached position and the first coupled position.

15. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 9 wherein the first and second coupler portions are two of a larger plurality of coupler portions, wherein each of the larger plurality of coupler portions are configured to be positioned proximate to a corresponding one of a larger plurality of coupling positions including the first and second coupling positions, are two of a larger plurality of coupling positions and the first and second coupler locations are two of a larger plurality of coupler locations, further wherein an outline of the coupling positions defines a first shape and an outline of the coupler locations portions defines a corresponding second shape at least generally similar to the first shape.

16. (Amended) An apparatus for supporting couplers for removable coupling to a recipient during at least one of therapy administration and/or recipient monitoring, the apparatus comprising a support member configured to rest on a body of the recipient, the support member having a first coupler location portion configured to be positioned proximate to a first coupling position of the body of the recipient, the support member further having a second coupler location portion configured to be positioned proximate to a second coupling position of the body of the recipient, the first coupler location portion being configured to removably carry a first coupler, wherein the first coupler is movable relative to the first coupler portion between a first carried position with the first coupler carried by the first coupler portion and a first coupled position with the first coupler operatively coupled to the recipient at the first coupling position, the second coupler location being configured to removably carry a second coupler, wherein the second coupler is movable relative to the second coupler portion between a second carried position with the second coupler carried by the second



coupler portion and a second coupled position with the second coupler operatively coupled to the recipient at the second coupling position, the first coupler location portion being configured to be positioned closer than the second coupler location portion to the first coupling position of the body of the recipient.

17. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 16, further comprising:

a first engagement member depending from the support member at the first coupler ~~location~~portion and configured to removably ~~carry~~engage the first coupler; and

a second engagement member depending from the support member at the second coupler ~~location~~portion and configured to removably ~~carry~~engage the second coupler.

19. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 16, further comprising:

the first coupler, wherein the first coupler ~~is moveable relative to the first coupler location between an attached position with the first coupler engaged with the support member at the first coupler location, a detached position with the first coupler disengaged from the first coupler location, and a coupled position with the first coupler operatively coupled to the recipient at the first coupling position, the first coupler having~~ has an electrical contact positioned configured to be connected to a percutaneous electrical probe inserted into the patient; and

a flexible cable connected between the first coupler and the support member, the cable remaining connected between the first coupler and the support member when the first coupler is moved from the first carried ~~attached position to the detached position and the first coupled position.~~

23. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 16 wherein the support member includes a cavity at the first coupler ~~location~~portion positioned to receive at least a portion of the first coupler.

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24. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 16 wherein the support member includes a column at the first coupler ~~location-portion~~ positioned to be received in an aperture of the first coupler.

26. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 16 wherein the first and second coupler portions are two of a larger plurality of coupler portions, wherein each of the larger plurality of coupler portions are configured to be positioned proximate to a corresponding one of a larger plurality of coupling positions including the first and second coupling positions, ~~are two of a larger plurality of coupling positions and the first and second coupler locations are two of a larger plurality of coupler locations,~~ further wherein an outline of the coupling positions defines a first shape and an outline of the coupler locations defines a corresponding second shape at least generally similar to the first shape.

27. (Amended) An apparatus for supporting couplers for removable coupling to a recipient during at least one of therapy administration and/or recipient monitoring, the apparatus comprising:

a support member configured to rest on a body of the recipient proximate to a coupling region, the support member having a first engagement ~~location-portion~~ configured to be positioned proximate to a first coupling position on the body of the recipient and a second engagement ~~location-portion~~ configured to be positioned proximate to a second coupling position on the body of the recipient;

a first engagement member configured to removably carry a first coupler at the first engagement ~~location-portion~~ of the support member, wherein the first coupler is movable relative to the first coupler portion between a first attached position with the first coupler carried by the first engagement member and a first coupled position with the first coupler operatively coupled to the recipient at the first coupling position; and

a second engagement member configured to removably carry a second coupler at the second engagement ~~location-portion~~ of the support member, wherein the second coupler is movable relative to the second coupler portion between a second

attached position with the second coupler carried by the second engagement member and a second coupled position with the second coupler operatively coupled to the recipient at the second coupling position, the first engagement member being configured to be positioned closer than the second engagement member to the first coupling position.

28. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 27, further comprising:

~~the first coupler, wherein the first coupler is moveable relative to the support member between an attached position with the first coupler engaged with the first engagement member, a detached position with the first coupler disengaged from the first engagement member, and a coupled position with the first coupler operatively coupled to the recipient at the first coupling position, the first coupler having~~ has an electrical contact ~~positioned~~ configured to be connected to a percutaneous electrical probe inserted into the patient; and

a flexible cable connected between the first coupler and the support member, the cable remaining connected between the first coupler and the support member when the first coupler is moved from the first attached position to the detached position ~~and the first~~ coupled position.

32. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 27, further comprising:

~~the first coupler, wherein the first coupler is moveable relative to the support member between an attached position with the first coupler engaged with the first engagement member, a detached position with the first coupler disengaged from the first engagement member, and a coupled position with the first coupler operatively coupled to the recipient at the first coupling position; and~~

a flexible link connected between the first coupler and the support member, the link remaining connected between the first coupler and the support member when the first coupler is moved from the first attached position to the detached position ~~and the first~~ coupled position.

36. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 27 ~~wherein the first coupler has an aperture and~~ wherein the first engagement member includes a column projecting away from the support member, the column configured and positioned to be received in the an aperture of the first coupler.

41. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the first and second engagement members are two of a larger plurality of engagement members, wherein each of the larger plurality of engagement members are configured to be positioned proximate to a corresponding one of a larger plurality of coupling positions including the first and second coupling positions, ~~are two of a larger plurality of coupling positions and the first and second engagement members are two of a larger plurality of engagement members,~~ further wherein an outline of the coupling positions defines a first shape and an outline of the engagement members defines a corresponding second shape at least generally similar to the first shape.

42. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the first and second coupling positions are two of a larger plurality of coupling positions located on first and second sides of a central axis of the support member, and wherein the first and second engagement members are two of a larger plurality of engagement members arranged in two rows on opposite sides of the central axis.

43. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the first and second coupling positions each have a longitudinal location along a body longitudinal axis and a lateral location transverse to the body longitudinal axis, and wherein the support member has a central support member axis generally aligned with the body longitudinal axis during operation, further wherein the first engagement member has a longitudinal location and a lateral location relative to the central support member axis that correspond to the longitudinal and lateral locations of the first coupling position relative to the body longitudinal axis, still further wherein the second engagement member has a longitudinal location and a lateral location relative to the central support

member axis that correspond to the longitudinal and lateral locations of the second coupling position relative to the body longitudinal axis.

47. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 27, further comprising the first coupler and wherein the first coupler includes an electrical connector positioned ~~to~~for ~~making~~ electrical contact with a percutaneous probe at the first coupling position.

50. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the first engagement member is configured to carry the first coupler includinginges an electrically conductive clamp.

51. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the first engagement member is configured to carry the first coupler includinginges an electrically conductive alligator clip.

52. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 27 wherein the first engagement member is configured to carry the first coupler includinginges an actuator tool ~~to~~configured to insert a percutaneous electrode in the recipient.

53. (Amended) An apparatus for supporting a plurality of percutaneous probe couplers in position for removable coupling to a recipient, comprising:

a flexible support member configured to rest on a body of a recipient and conform to a curvature of the body proximate to a location where the couplers are to be coupled to the body;

a first engagement member depending from the support member and configured to ~~removably engage a first coupler~~be positioned proximate to a first coupling position on the body;

a first coupler removably engaged with the first engagement member;

a first electrical cable attached between the first coupler and the support member;

a second engagement member depending from the support member body and configured to ~~removably engage a second coupler~~ be positioned proximate to a second coupling position on the body of the recipient, the first engagement member being configured to be positioned closer than the second engagement member to the first coupling position, the second engagement member being configured to be positioned closer than the first engagement member to the second coupling position;  
a second coupler removably engaged with the first second engagement member; and  
a second electrical cable attached between the second coupler and the support member.

55. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 53 wherein the first coupler includes an actuator tool configured to insert a percutaneous electrode in the recipient.

64. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 53 wherein the first and second engagement members are two of a larger plurality of engagement members, wherein each of the larger plurality of engagement members are configured to be positioned proximate to a corresponding one of a larger plurality of coupling positions including the first and second coupling positions, are two of a larger plurality of coupling positions and the first and second engagement members are two of a larger plurality of engagement positions, further wherein an outline of the coupling positions defines a first shape and an outline of the engagement members defines a corresponding second shape at least generally similar to the first shape.

65. (Amended) An apparatus for supporting a plurality of percutaneous probe couplers in position for removable coupling to a recipient, comprising:  
a flexible support member configured to rest on a body of a recipient and conform to a curvature of the body proximate to a coupling location where the couplers are to be coupled to the body, the support member having a central axis;

a first engagement member depending from the support member and positioned on a first side of the central axis, the first engagement member being configured to ~~removably engage a first coupler~~ be positioned proximate to a first coupling position on the body of the recipient, the first coupling position located on the first side of the central axis;

a first coupler removably engaged with the first engagement member;

a first electrical cable attached between the first coupler and the support member;

a second engagement member depending from the support member and positioned on a second side of the central axis opposite the first side of the central axis, the second engagement member being configured to ~~removably engage a second coupler~~ be positioned proximate to a second coupling position on the body of the recipient, the second coupling position located on the second side of the central axis;

a second coupler removably engaged with the ~~first~~ second engagement member; and

a second electrical cable attached between the second coupler and the support member.

67. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 65 wherein the first coupler includes an actuator tool to ~~configured to~~ insert a percutaneous electrode in the recipient.

76. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 65 wherein the first and second engagement members are two of a larger plurality of engagement members, wherein each of the larger plurality of engagement members are configured to be positioned proximate to a corresponding one of a larger plurality of coupling positions including the first and second coupling positions, ~~are two of a larger plurality of coupling positions and the first and second engagement members are two of a larger plurality of engagement positions,~~ further wherein an outline of the coupling positions defines a first shape and an outline of the engagement members defines a corresponding second shape at least generally similar to the first shape.

77. (Amended) An apparatus for supporting a plurality of percutaneous probe couplers in position for removable coupling to a recipient, comprising:

a flexible support member configured to rest on a back of a recipient and conform to a curvature of the back proximate to a coupling region of the back, the support member having a central axis, a first elongated portion positioned along the central axis a second elongated portion extending transversely to the central axis on first and second sides of the central axis and a third elongated portion between the first and second elongated portions and extending transversely to the central axis on the first and second sides of the central axis;

five pairs of engagement posts depending from the support member, engagement posts of a first pair positioned on opposite sides of the central axis toward an end of the first elongated portion, engagement posts of a second pair positioned at opposite ends of the second elongated portion, engagement posts of a third pair positioned at opposite ends of the third elongated portion, engagement posts of a fourth pair positioned on opposite sides of the central axis between the first and second pair, and engagement posts of a fifth pair positioned on opposite sides of the central axis between the second and third pair;

five pairs of couplers, each coupler having an aperture with aperture walls removably engaged with one of the engagement posts; and

five pairs of electrical cables with each electrical cable attached between one of the couplers and the support member.

79. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 77 wherein the first coupler includes an actuator tool ~~to insert~~ configured to insert a percutaneous electrode in the recipient.

82. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 77 wherein the coupling region of the back of the recipient includes a plurality of coupling positions, and wherein an outline of the coupling positions defines a first shape and an outline of the engagement

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members defines a corresponding second shape at least generally similar to the first shape.

82. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 77 wherein ~~the coupling region of the back of the recipient includes~~the support member is configured to rest on the back of the recipient proximate to the coupling region having a plurality of coupling positions, and wherein an outline of the coupling positions defines a first shape and an outline of the engagement members defines a corresponding second shape at least generally similar to the first shape.

83. (Amended) An apparatus for supporting couplers for removable coupling to a recipient during at least one of therapy administration and/or recipient monitoring, the apparatus comprising:

support member configured to rest on a body of the recipient, the support member having a first coupler ~~location~~portion configured to be positioned proximate to a first coupling position of the body of the recipient, the support member further having a second coupler ~~location~~portion configured to be positioned proximate to a second coupling position of the body of the recipient, ~~the first coupler location being configured to carry a first coupler, the second coupler location being configured to carry a second coupler, the first coupler location~~portion being configured to be positioned closer than the second coupler ~~location~~portion to the first coupling position on the body of the recipient;

a first coupler configured to be operatively coupled to the body and removably supported at the first coupler ~~location~~portion;

a second coupler configured to be operatively coupled to the body and removably supported at the second coupler ~~location~~portion;

a recipient care unit configured to deliver therapy, ~~and/or~~monitor a condition of the recipient, or delivery therapy and monitor a condition of the recipient; and

a first link between the care unit and the first coupler and a second link between the care unit and the second coupler.

87. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 83 wherein the first coupler is moveable relative to the support member between an attached position with the first coupler engaged with the support member at the first coupler location, a detached position with the first coupler disengaged from the first coupler location, and a coupled position with the first coupler operatively coupled to the recipient at the first coupling position, the first coupler having an electrical contact ~~positioned to for connect~~ connecting to a percutaneous electrical probe inserted into the patient, and further wherein the first link includes a flexible electrical cable.

93. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 83 wherein the first and second coupler portions are two of a larger plurality of coupler portions, wherein each of the larger plurality of coupler portions are configured to be positioned proximate to a corresponding one of a larger plurality of coupling positions including the first and second coupling positions, ~~are two of a larger plurality of coupling positions and the first and second coupler locations are two of a larger plurality of coupler locations,~~ further wherein an outline of the coupling positions defines a first shape and an outline of the coupler locations defines a corresponding second shape at least generally similar to the first shape.